

Vol. CXCVIII No. 5155

January 17 1940

Charivaria

We read that a certain popular novelist works in a room that contains nothing but a cheap table and chair. Lots of unpopular novelists do the same.

"Whisky has saved the lives of many new-born babes," says a country doctor. Only very tiny tots, of course.

"Macon" is the first "substitute food" in Britain, according to a Nazi writer. Any dairyman will tell him, however, that the very first was wilk.

"Little Doctor Goebbels needs a long rest," says a writer. So we should imagine. Especially at billiards.



A Manchester man has used the same collar-stud for thirty-three years. It was in the beginning of 1907, we understand, when he glued the thing firmly to the back of his neck.

"Have you ever broken the ice just before having a swim?" asks an all-the-year bather in an evening paper. Yes, but we had been assured that it would bear us.



It is alleged that the burglar who broke into a house in Aberdeen the other night had his flash-lamp battery stolen.

The secret of Germany's secret weapon is out. There wasn't one.

Snowdrops and croci, we are told, are now peeping through the ground in many parts of the country. So much for the German air menace.

According to a Dutch writer, the home of the ex-Kaiser is so modest that it does not even contain a spare room. It sounds as if Herr HITLER will have to make himself as comfortable as he can in the porch.

A Fruitless Quest

"Pour acheter des pommes il faut chercher un épicier vert."

Schoolgirl's Translation.

"A new type of 'economical coal' produced in Germany," reveals a writer, "will not burn at all." Well, nothing could be more economical than that.



"The Fuehrer," says a German authority, "says what he thinks." Much more, in our opinion.

Wag

"He entertains with his ear." *Daily paper.*

The G.P.O. is urging the public to send more telegrams of congratulation. It is possible to lay it on very thick with post-office ink.



"Yes, dear, it does help to keep one bright and cheerful these days."

Graces

FOR the following observations I have drawn freely upon the advice laid down by the fourth Lord Chesterfield. The marks of good breeding do not alter materially with the times. It is just as true now as it was in the latter part of the eighteenth century, when the earl first noted it, that a man who splashes the faces of the company with gravy is not out of the top drawer. People who are temporarily blinded with gravy may not always be able to track down the culprit immediately. Indeed if he is not too immersed himself he will have disposed of the incriminating gravy-boat with all dispatch, probably thrusting it at the footman, who will, in the circles in which Lord Chesterfield and I move, remain quite unruffled by the consignment of gravy on his own face. If he thus eludes detection or if his action has passed unnoticed

owing to the large quantity of gravy on the company's faces already, there are innumerable other little tricks by which the ill-bred man is bound to give himself away sooner or later. "Probably," Lord Chesterfield remarks, and he has studied the subject from A to Z, "he will empty his glass into his neighbours' pockets." It is always a wise precaution before sitting down near those of doubtful breeding to remove stamps, paper money, white mice and other perishable objects from the pockets which might get damaged in the event of their being inundated with hock or liqueur brandy.

Actually it has taken many people years of practice to reach such peaks of ill-breeding, and we need only concern ourselves with the simpler manifestations, such as, for instance, catching your sword between your legs (coming in a lot now), and dropping your stick

each time you stoop to pick up your hat, which you have previously dropped each time you stooped to pick up your stick. Driving carriages is dreadfully lowering, and eating your soup with your nose in your plate is an infallible sign of bad taste and good soup.

It is desperately plebeian to play cribbage, all-fours or putt, and quite beyond the pale even to know anybody who indulges in such rude forms of sport as skittles, football, cricket and leap-frog. I well remember my discomfort at an hotel when discovering that an otherwise well-mannered fellow-diner was a cricketer. I asked to be moved to another table, only to find myself immediately opposite a man playing solo cribbage with his nose in his soup. It was a severe shock, and thenceforward I have always dined at home, taking care to select a staff who showed no inclination to play leap-frog.

But there are men who sink to even lower depths than this, men whom Lord Chesterfield, bless him, cannot avoid calling illiberal in the extreme. These are the people who play musical instruments. "It makes a gentleman appear frivolous and contemptible," he says, "leads him frequently into bad company and wastes that time which might otherwise be well employed." Lord Chesterfield himself, as far as I have been able to ascertain, employed a lot of his time curtsying at the court of Vienna.

Another thing that Lord Chesterfield and I stand firm about is audible laughter. Real wit, we maintain (I trust without bitterness), never made anyone laugh. I can myself remember my embarrassment, which I was of course too well-bred to reveal, on encountering a person who was laughing audibly and unreservedly at a witty article I had penned. I could only conclude that he had completely mistaken my meaning and was too

ill-bred to conceal his mirth. Lord Chesterfield recalls a similar incident when the table was set in a roar as a result of a man who on going to sit down in the supposition that he had a chair behind him, fell down on his breech for want of one. "Laughter," Lord Chesterfield adds, "occasions a shocking distortion of the face." Lord Chesterfield and I never go to Laurel and Hardy films unless there's absolutely nothing else on.

Some things, while admittedly silly, must be practised if they are fashionable, such as dancing; and here Lord Chesterfield and I reach our first serious point of difference. It is his contention that if a man dances well from the waist upwards, if he wears his hat well and moves his head well, he dances well. I maintain that there are exceptions to this rule, such as, for instance, if he wears roller-skates or otherwise fails to bring his feet into conformity with the dance; but I dare say that this is proof that after all

customs do change with the times. Some people might even go so far as to say that if a man danced superbly with his feet and above the waist he would still be a good dancer even if he didn't wear his hat well—perhaps even if he didn't wear his hat at all.

Do not be discouraged therefore, reader, if you find the pillars of present-day society playing darts and being jitterbugs with their womenfolk in trousers. Be secure in the knowledge that they are wrong and the laugh (inaudible of course) is on them.

There is one other small point on which Lord Chesterfield and I do not see eye to eye. He is of the opinion that if a lady dropped her fan the worst-bred man in Europe would stoop to pick it up, albeit so ungracefully as to excite mockery. This I maintain is untrue to-day. The worst-bred man in Europe would confiscate the fan and have it made into butter, and put its owner into a concentration camp for acting in a non-Aryan manner.



"Now, dear, just don't think about the war."

No Enmity

THEY shall have our smiles and pardon when the night goes into morn
Because they loved their Leader—theirself were not forsworn,

Because they murdered and plundered, but only as they were told,

The fighting men shall greet them when the battle fire is cold,
And the merchants in the cities shall take them by the hand
For all their rapine and slaughter between the sky and the land.

But the sea is an angry tyrant, bitter and cold and grey
To those who steal the captives that he himself would slay,
The sea is a jealous master on high white horses driven,
And those who strike his bond-slaves not easily are forgiven.

They shall have our smiles and pardon, but not because they broke

The covenant of the water that keeps the fishing-folk
Whose way is through the tempest to earn their winter store,

Whose peace is not as our peace, with whom the winds make war.

They shall have our smiles and pardon, but not because they gave

Death to the lost and broken facing the death of the wave.
They shall have our smiles and pardon; but they shall have with these

The everlasting hatred of the servants of the seas.

EVOE.

o o

Early-Morning Fun

GOOD MORNING, everyone who wasn't listening to the seven o'clock news, of which the eight o'clock news will be a repetition, and excepting of course those who sat up to listen to the twelve o'clock news last night. I'll just repeat that. Good morning.

Now, this morning I want us all to get to work with the chair again. You remember the chair? Just draw it out into the very middle of the room, and remember to steer clear of the fire-place, the gas-ring, the cat and your own knitting.

You haven't forgotten your legs, have you, because we're going to want them for the exercise. So if you've all got your chair and your legs we'll start right away, just getting all the fun we can out of this splendid form of exercise.

Swing upwards and outwards and inwards and down. Swing forwards and backwards and both ways at once. Swing sideways and over and under and stop. Good.

I think we all felt that went with a swing, didn't we? And if any of you found that some of the china or the pictures, or perhaps the electric light, went with a swing too, I just want you to sweep the pieces up with the right hand holding the dust-pan . . . Good! Sweep upwards and outwards and inwards and stop.

Now, once more with the chair, and this time we shan't need legs but I want you to remember your arms. Never forget that you have arms and that, in their own way, they're just as important as legs, except of course when it comes to walking—which is quite another thing, as I expect some of you realise already.

Try that once again, with that last arm especially, and the other one just loosely brushing the seat of the chair where the upholstery meets the springs. Good! If some of you are perhaps not absolutely certain that you got the exact centre of the spot where the upholstery meets the springs you can arrange some other rendezvous for them before the seven o'clock news to-morrow morning.

I think now we ought to use our heads, which are really quite an important part of our bodies if only we use them. And the very best way of using them is the exercise we had such fun with yesterday morning—tossing upwards and outwards and back-round-to-front.

Splendid!

Remember to get the head the right way round again before going down to breakfast, won't you? And one word more about this rather jolly fun with heads: I hope those of you who live in flats will remember not to bang them on the floor in such a way as to disturb those sleeping below. We don't want our splendid health-giving exercises to make us selfish, do we?

Now, I think those of you who listened to the seven o'clock news, as well as those of you who didn't, will want to listen to the eight o'clock news; so that only gives us time for one more exercise, and I think we ought to start it straight away, just swinging—and jumping—and twisting—and hop. And over—and over—and over—and stop. We want to be ever so careful not to hop when we mean stop, don't we? Once again—and remember that if you haven't remembered to put the chair right out on to the landing it's going to get in your way now and perhaps break some leg or arm that we're going to want again for to-morrow morning's exercises, so it's quite a good plan to move out the chair and perhaps some of the rest of the furniture as well, taking it side-ways and front-ways, and all-ways, and drop.

I'm afraid we can't do very much more this morning, but just to end up with I want you all to breathe—a thing that so many of us are always forgetting to do.

To-morrow morning we're all going to see whether we can't get in quite a lot of breathing before the eight o'clock news—and of course the exercises as well. So I want all of you to remember that you've got something really to look forward to, and have your chairs and arms and legs all ready—and we can fit in heads as well if there's time, or if not, just keep them till next week. E. M. D.

o o

The Depressed Bride

I HAVE come home now, down the sad dark street, where heavy lie the greasy winter leaves.

Home! Our substantiated dream, the freshly painted walls, the covers cream, the yellow curtains hanging crisply new, the pale unfurnished shelves with books askew. A happy place, and yet my spirit grieves, black as the mud about your Corporal's feet.

Here with the wedding silver I shall eat. Calthrop will give me grouse your mother sent, everything will be done to ease my lot, the soufflé will be cold, the coffee hot. Afterwards I shall climb the emerald stair, sit with my knitting in a fire-lit chair. Would I were buried in your soggy tent, deep as the mud about your Corporal's feet! V. G.



FAIRLY HAPPY FAMILIES



"I do wish the war would finish. Both of the decorators I had working here were reservists."

Rabbits-for-Food

II

AS I said in the first lecture, I have no wish to discourage the citizen from increasing the nation's food by growing rabbits in his suburban home. But some of the experiences of a veteran in the great rabbit-growing year 1917-1918 may be useful.

The recipe for making rabbits is simple:

Take 1 buck rabbit
 " 2 doe rabbits
 " 3 hutches
 " 28 days

By this formula, in my experience, an average of eight or nine rabbits a month can be made. Or more. The formula allows each mother a rest of one month: but our great Flemish doe Desdemona, at least, would never have insisted on so much. She seemed to love the life. And though on the smallest provocation she would petulantly eat her young, the big black brute, she was always ready to produce another family.

I referred in the first lecture to the

stubborn nature of the rabbit and his dynamic will-to-escape. Both Stephen and Desdemona were always fighting their way out of the nice hutches provided for them, and pitilessly devoured the garden in the hours of darkness. When restored to their prisons, and, for a few days, firmly secured, they kicked up such a din at night that half the suburb complained.

After a month or two of this the stronger will prevailed, and we made a virtue of their necessity. "After all," we said, "why not let the dear little things get out? And stay out? It must be horrid for them in their narrow cages. There is so little left of the back-garden, anyhow, that it would be pedantic and unpatriotic to preserve the rest. Unscrupulous and strong though they are, the rabbits will not be able to leap over the walls (though Desdemona does seem capable of anything). Left free to roam, they will, without doubt, make burrows, as their old-fashioned custom is, and produce their families underground. The young

will there be safe from cats and they will grow up, presumably, much fitter and happier in their natural surroundings than they will ever be in captivity. We shall no longer have to clean out their disgusting hutches and spend a fortune on sawdust and straw. And the dear little rabbits will stop annoying the neighbours with loud noises at night."

A charming, practical notion, said everybody. And we did it. It worked at once. The monstrous doe, having eaten a bit more of the garden, went to the lilac-bush and with her four fierce paws constructed a burrow among the roots. This was a thrilling day.

There was another thrill about a month later when Desdemona emerged from her lair in the morning about one-third of her former size. "Ha, ha!" a family!" we said. "Nine or ten new food-units for the nation!" We plied the old lady with lettuces and caresses. She snapped at both, as usual. And then she did a fearful thing.

Deliberately, under our anxious gaze, she scraped earth out of the

January

burrow
Then s
left of
"He

noyed
going t
to suff

Then

for the

was tu

admitt

defence

below.

well w

once s

stoppe

not dar

take v

young.

stoppe

it. Thi

As usu

great r

the Ac

mentio

convoy

whole

my fla

the foc

set-bac

But

someon

mon c

locks u

eating

not att

ing. (A

be nur

after I

the ea

bunnie

piebal

thrived

Margar

cats. I

and di

nation,

before.

But

not dis

ing for

or mor

under

I can

to all t

many

Desden

Some,

Margar

were k

suppos

know,

and I r

of eati

decide

Desden

produc

no one

temper

burrow and stopped the entrance. Then she went away and ate what was left of our nasturtiums.

"Heavens!" we said. "She is annoyed again. But this time she is not going to eat her young. She is going to suffocate them."

There was only one thing to be done for the nation. I waited till her back was turned, and opened the hole, thus admitting the precious air to the defenceless brood of dear little bunnies below. The doe, however, knew very well what I was up to, and almost at once she returned and methodically stopped the entrance again. We did not dare to interfere, in case she should take violent umbrage and devour her young. Stealthily we removed the stopper again: stubbornly she restored it. This went on for a couple of hours. As usual in these tussles of will, the great rabbit won. I had to go off to the Admiralty (where, as I think I mentioned, I was then running the convoy system); and she had the whole day to play with. I hauled down my flag and departed, believing that the food-of-the-nation had suffered a set-back.

But the old girl knew best. Later someone told me that this is the common custom among rabbits. Mother looks up the young for the day, goes off eating and enjoying herself, and does not attend to her babies till the evening. (A pity that our own young cannot be nurtured as easily.) At all events, after I forget how many days, out of the earth came nine delightful little bunnies—two black, four brown, two piebald, and one bright yellow. They thrived. Two were given to Cousin Margaret, and seven were eaten by cats. But they were a healthy family, and did credit to all. The food of the nation, however, was where it was before.

But Stephen and Desdemona were not discouraged. They went on working for the Allies and produced three or more healthy families (all colours) under the lilac-bush.

I cannot remember what happened to all these dear little rabbits. Not so many were eaten by the cats; for Desdemona savaged a cat or two. Some, I know, were given to Cousin Margaret and other children; some were kept by our own. Some died, I suppose, in the burrow. But none, I know, were ever eaten in our home; and I never heard of an authentic case of eating elsewhere. After a while we decided on a change of breed. For Desdemona, though black, kept on producing bright yellow babies (which no one could think of eating), her temper became unbearable, and the

neighbours complained about the wounds she inflicted on their Persian cats.

So one morning, when her last family was well advanced, I carted Desdemona to the Admiralty, to be exchanged with a colleague there, another rabbit-for-food-grower, for a more orthodox English doe. She travelled in a basket; but during the day I humanely gave her the run of the bottom shelf of the stationery-cupboard, where she browsed among five miles of Form ARQ/1/39874.

We ran the convoy system in the old Admiralty House, in the room, they said, where Nelson lay in state. After lunch I happened to be alone in the room except for Desdemona, who was quiet in her cupboard, and a mild man who had come down from another department to ask me to convoy two tankers from America. I said we would. The mild man was just going away when suddenly Desdemona burst from her cupboard and ran into a bright shaft of sunlight which lay across the floor. She was black; she was enormous; in her fierce jaws she carried a great chunk of Form ARQ/1/39874, with which, I suppose, she intended to line some heroic nest. Her whiskers stood out from the form like spears; she grunted; she stamped with her hind legs; she was an alarming sight. Nothing like it, I suppose, had ever been seen at the British Admiralty—certainly not by the gentle civil servant. His eyes started from his head; his hair stood on end; and, pointing a quivering finger, he whispered: "Do you see *that*?"

"What?" I said naughtily, gazing blankly at Desdemona. "I don't see anything."

The mild man groaned, rushed from the room, and is, I take it, a teetotaller to this day.

* * * * *

We were sad, though glad, to see the last of Desdemona. But we hadn't. The war came to an end. We demobilised and dispersed our rabbits, keeping only the tame and affectionate buck, Stephen, who strolled about the house and garden as before. We tore down the miles of wire-netting and broke up the hutches. We even talked of starting a garden again. And a few weeks later an entirely new and unsuspected family of rabbits (mainly yellow) popped out from under the lilac-bush. A week later another family appeared in the garden next door. Stephen had been even busier than we thought. In December rabbits were reported in the Vicarage garden. It was nothing to do with us, we said: but we privately observed that some, at least, were yellow. Stephen himself became restless without his mates, and took to roaming. One day he came up in the garden of Number 4, and was brought back by an unenthusiastic neighbour. The next week he was missing for three days. On the fourth day all the lights in the Borough went out. Nothing to do with us, we said: but our dear Stephen never returned.

* * * * *

But, yes, by all means breed rabbits. They are very good food. A. P. H.



"Why do I feel so optimistic? Well, my dear, I've knitted more socks in the last fortnight than I did in the whole of the first four months of the last war."

At the Pictures

WASHINGTON AND LILLIPUT

IT should be interesting, I think, to see what FRANK CAPRA does about the Speech in his next picture. As I look back, and forget things that don't fit with my theory, it seems to me that the Speech in his pictures has got more and more important and longer and longer, until in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* it turns out to last twenty-three hours and sixteen minutes. . . . I don't see how he can beat that, ever. Perhaps he will go back to the beginning and produce a film round HARPO MARX.

This is merely an observation; I don't wish to be disrespectful to *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* nor, most of all, to Mr. CAPRA. The picture is very good, beautifully done and extremely entertaining. It is long, but well worth the time it takes. Its theme is the defeat of political graft by simple-hearted idealism. JAMES STEWART is *Mr. Smith*, a young leader of Boy Rangers who is appointed, on the assumption that he will be a meek "stooge," to succeed a Senator who has died. But *Mr. Smith* is passionately patriotic and has a disconcerting belief in the reality of democracy; inspired by the historic city and the brooding statue of LINCOLN, informed and spurred on by a cynical but golden-hearted blonde (JEAN ARTHUR—who else?), he "filibusters" against a dishonest Bill by speaking in the Senate for the impressive period mentioned above, and wins. In this instance, you perceive, simple-hearted idealism triumphs only because it is reinforced by physical endurance.

This Senate scene, the high spot of the picture, is first-rate; and I may as well add my word or two to the chorus of praise for the performance of HARRY CAREY as the sympathetic vice-president. Among the other excellent players are CLAUDE RAINS as a crooked but eventually conscience-stricken Senator, EDWARD ARNOLD as a political boss, and GUY KIBBEE. Entertaining throughout, often funny, well-made and full of brilliant touches, like all Mr. CAPRA's pictures, this one has a basic idea very much more worth

while than—for instance—that of his last.

The weakness of the cartoon *Gulliver's Travels* (Director: DAVE FLEISCHER)



J.H.D.W.

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE
SENATOR'S PROMPTING GIRL-FRIEND

Clarissa Saunders JEAN ARTHUR



J.H.D.

[Gulliver's Travels]

Wavering Princess (to Gulliver). "I WISH MY PRINCE WERE A GREAT BIG STRONG MAN LIKE YOU."

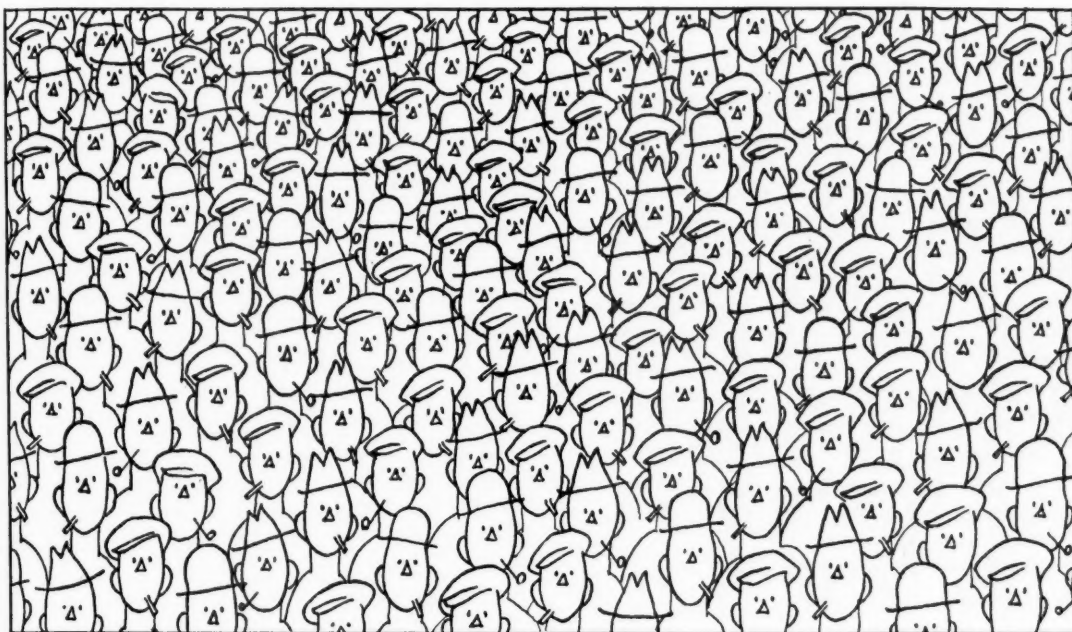
is the same as the weakness of the cartoon *Snow White*: the normal, or rather idealised, human beings. It seems to me as fatal to introduce normality into a cartoon film as it would be to have a photographically accurate tree in the middle of an Impressionist landscape: it's out of the convention. This handsome *Gulliver* who keeps beaming indulgently and saying "My, my," at each manifestation of the silliness of these silly little people (and he's a fine one to jeer, the big *homo sapiens*) is a bit of a bore. So are the Prince and the Princess, who make love and sing a song called "Faithful Forever" for the sake of the sheet-music royalties and because there were love and songs in *Snow White*. But apart from this, I enjoyed *Gulliver* more, for I prefer the comic to the deliberately charming, and there is more fun in *Gulliver*—more real fun, I mean, not merely gentle playfulness. Very little is left of SWIFT, of course; but did you expect there to be much?

SACHA GUITRY produces another brilliantly amusing piece in *Remontons les Champs Elysées*. As usual, it is unmistakable GUITRY even apart from his unmistakably individual method of narrative (the illustrated monologue). A schoolmaster tells his class the story of the noble avenue by telling the stories of his ancestors—for he is descended, he declares, from LOUIS XV. M. GUITRY himself is the schoolmaster and pops up in various parts through the centuries. The film delighted me; I shall see it again for the sake of some details I may have missed.

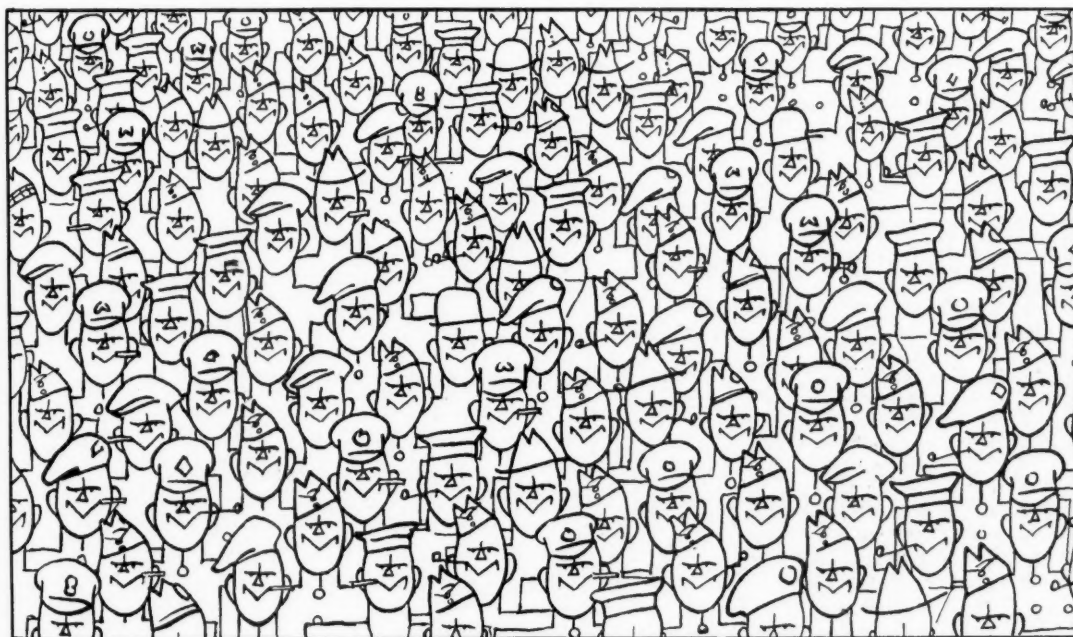
Twenty-One Days (Director: BASIL DEAN) is a British picture which, though unsatisfactory as a whole, has many good points. Adapted from a GALSWORD story, but with a forced "happy ending" in place of the original tragedy, it deals with one of those pairs of brothers (one good, one bad) so common in fiction, and shows how the bad one is the good one after all. LAURENCE OLIVIER, VIVIAN LEIGH, LESLIE BANKS . . . I'm sorry to say *The Rains Came* (Director: CLARENCE BROWN) left me unmoved. A surprising number of pictures in sepiä do, but the conjunction is perhaps fortuitous. R. M.

THE CHANGING FACE OF BRITAIN

XXI.—THE CHANGING FACE ITSELF



1



2



"Why, look, dear, there's one of those new street lights!"

Behind the Lines

XVII.—Excelsior

THE shades of night were falling fast
When through a Cornish village passed
A youth who carried in the rain
A placard with the odd refrain,
"Excelsior!"

I write it thus
Because the Censor made a fuss.
He said "Good heavens, look at this!
An *Alpine* village! That's the Swiss!
This chap of yours appears to be
Infringing Swiss neutrality!"

"You know," I said, "there's just a chance
This *Alpine* village was in France."

"Geography," the man replied,
"Is for the Censor to decide.
But even if the place were French,
There'd be an observation trench,
A listening-post, or what you will,
Sited on some convenient hill.
And now you're going to tell the Huns
Exactly where to train their guns!"

I said, "This youth, for what it's worth,
Was an American by birth."

The Censor quivered in his chair:
"That's right," he said, "now tell them where
And when America comes in!
D'you *want* the enemy to win?"

I said, "Your pardon, gentle Sir!
Pick any village you prefer."

The Censor scratched a thoughtful head:
"Try Moreton-in-the-Marsh," he said.
"It's good," said I, "but doesn't fit."
"Well, keep the East Coast out of it."
I promised him I wouldn't rest
Until I'd got it in the West.

The Censor groaned and wiped his brow.
I said, "Well, what's the matter now?"
The Censor said "My sainted aunt!
You can't, you absolutely *can't*
Go chattering about the *snow*!"
"Can't you?" I said, "I didn't know."
"Good Gort!" he said, "you've done it *twice*!"
I said the second one was ice.
He cried, "But snow and ice together
Is *telling* Germany the weather!"

"Your pardon, Sir," I said again,
"We'll have a thaw and make it rain."
"That's right," he said, "but don't imply
A fixed condition in the sky."

The Censor wasn't happy yet:
"A point," he said, "of etiquette—
This chap of yours, this feller bore
A *banner*—Now in modern war
It isn't done. At Waterloo
My Uncle Henry carried two;
At Inkerman, I recollect,
We still considered it correct;
But when we come to Spion Kop
Or Omdurman—" I shouted "Stop!
This isn't meant to be the *truth*,
It's *poetry*, about a youth
Who didn't fight in any war,
But simply said 'Excelsior!'"

The Censor looked a shocked surprise:
"You mean," he said, "you're telling *lies*?"
"Well, yes and no," I said; "you see
It's Longfellow, it isn't me."
The Censor went into a dream . . .
Then murmured "Longfellow? I seem
To know the feller somehow. What's
His regiment—the Royal Scots?
I knew a chap in Poona once—
Is this the Longfellow who *hunts*?"

I said, "No matter, let it go:
I'm leaving out his ice and snow."
"That's right," he said, "and leave his rank
And regiment *completely* blank."

*The shades of night were falling fast
When in the corridor I passed,
While hurrying to catch my train,
A liftman with the odd refrain,
'Excelsior, or Going Down!'
I took the lift and left the town.*

A. A. M.

My Literary Life

LONDON! Ah, the intoxication of that word to the young aspirant to literary fame! What matter that to me London meant a tiny attic in Camden Town, crammed to bursting with a marble clock and a single basket-chair? What matter that it meant water to drink, and dry bread to eat, and old copies of *The Times Literary Supplement* to smoke? I was young in those days.

It was in the autumn of 1888 that I arrived in London, a rustic youth poor in all save ambition. With me I had brought the manuscripts of two novels—one very long and called *Mud: A Study in Traumatic Expressionism*, the other shorter and called *Elsie's Prince Charming*. I had no doubt whatever that with one or other of them I should achieve fame and fortune.

But alas for my hopes! Within six months both had been rejected by every publisher in London, in some cases in the most insulting fashion. One publisher, for instance, returning the manuscripts, put sneezing-powder on the pages.

Treatment of this sort would have made most people cynical. I was made of sterner stuff. I began to realise that there was only one way, short of physical violence, by which I could get my talents recognised. I must join one of the groups or schools of artists and writers—associations of creative workers cemented by common ideals and the possession of only one pair of trousers between them.

I took to going to the old Café Mal de Dents in the Caledonian Market, a famous resort of literary men. There I might have been seen any evening, with a plate of French mustard and a glass of herb beer before me, listening to the brilliant conversation that echoed on every side. Yet however persistently I might edge up my chair to Ruskin, Pater, Burne-Jones or Swinburne, with one or other of my novels in my hand, they would as persistently edge away. In my sensitive fashion I would sometimes wonder why.

On one occasion I could have sworn that Rossetti, after making a remark to William Morris, turned and winked at me. That night I went home, flung myself on my bed and wept for joy. Such is the extravagance of youth! Next day I was early at the café. The moment Rossetti entered I stood up and winked at him. But for some reason he became extremely angry and instantly turned his back. My hopes were dashed to the ground.

Then one evening an event occurred which changed my whole life. I met Hubert Allbottle. How many people, I wonder, have heard of Allbottle to-day? How many had heard of him even then? There are few things so uncertain as literary fame. How often does it happen that an author for whom immortality has been prophesied proves in the sober light of history to have been unable to read or write, or even not to have existed at all? But I digress.

For some time I had noticed a certain habitué of the café who sat by himself a few tables away from me. He was a tall distinguished-looking man with a piercing eye, beetling brows, a red aquiline nose and a long black beard. I often wondered who he was. I decided eventually that he was either Thomas Hardy, or George Meredith, or both. As time passed I became convinced that he was as interested in me as I was in him. He would stare at me for hours on end, occasionally stuffing his handkerchief into his mouth with a strange nervous gesture.

One evening, both happening to enter the café simultaneously, we got wedged together in the doorway. While we were being extricated by the somewhat cumbersome block and tackle in use in those days the stranger introduced himself. His name was Hubert Allbottle.

Instantly my mind was awl with excited conjectures. Allbottle? Where had I heard the name? Was he poet, novelist or playwright? I could not remember. But I knew with utter certainty that the man was a genius. It was natural that I should ask him back to my lodgings, and even more natural that he, in his absent-minded way, should stay on indefinitely. That night Allbottle occupied my basket-chair, while I tried to snatch a fitful sleep on the mantelpiece. Next day a number of battered trunks and suit-cases arrived at the house. So began an association which was to be ended only by death.

Friendship, they say, thrives best between opposites. Certainly it was so in our case. Allbottle was a very large man; I was under the middle size. Allbottle was about fifty years old; I was only eighteen. I had a small amount of money saved up; Allbottle seemed to have no money at all.

But he had all the eccentricity and all the divine egotism of genius. Sometimes, for instance, when I was talking he would suddenly burst out into a roar of laughter which became so ungovernable that he had to thrust his head up the chimney. He had many literary friends too who were as eccentric as himself. There were several taciturn men with large boots and bowler-hats, who would appear in the house at odd times and sit in my room for hours, their eyes on Allbottle in a kind of watchful admiration. I felt that at last I was a part of London's literary life.

Yet on the subject of my own writing Allbottle was often curiously evasive. Like most men of genius he was so wrapped up in his own work, I suppose, that the work of others meant nothing to him. Once I asked him if he could put in a word for me with his publisher. To my surprise his reply was a swinging backhander which sent me staggering against the ceiling. Yes, there was a vein of frank brutality in Hubert Allbottle, as in most men of genius.

He was seldom sober. He was always drunk. He never washed. He was given to bad language. But when the moment of inspiration came and the urge to create was upon him I could forgive all. On these occasions he would lock himself in my room for several days at a time, and as I came and went or doubtfully tried the door-handle I would hear in a kind of enchantment the rhythmic snores which told of the mighty work then going forward.

Two years passed. Literary fame seemed as far away as ever. And at last, to my horror, Allbottle's health began to fail. The day came when he took to his basket-chair and would see no one. I had to go and sleep at Euston Station, whence every day, as requested by the sufferer, I sent in a crate of whisky and some ham-sandwiches. On the 14th December, 1890, Hubert Allbottle passed peacefully away from delirium tremens.

I had just enough money to pay for the funeral. I returned to my room and in a torrent of emotion hurled myself on the dead man's suit-cases. If there was any literary masterpiece to be found it would be only just to give it to the world. But a bitter blow awaited me. What I found proved conclusively that the late Hubert Allbottle was neither poet, novelist nor playwright. He was a retired bird-seed manufacturer, who some years previously had deserted a wife and seventeen children at Wolverhampton.

For a long time I sat in the basket-chair which was mine once more, staring into the fire. There was not a sound except for the roar of the traffic outside, the ringing of church bells, the distant mutter of thunder, the howling of the wind, and the booming voice of my landlord demanding the rent. My literary life was over.

The Broken Briar

("My pipe is lost."—Matthew Arnold.)

T WAS a broken bowl I found
As I lightly strolled around;
Bashed and dented in the ground
There it lay;
It was full of dust and grit,
Yet one couldn't but admit
That it must have cost a bit
In its day.

And I marvelled by what hap
It was fated thus to snap;
'Twas no ordinary tap
On the heel;
For the grain was tough as teak;
One could rap it by the week
And it wouldn't, so to speak,
Give a squeal.

No, the owner in his pride,
Wot you wull, had been defied
By some fluff that stuck inside
In a ball

And, nigh maddened for a smoke,
With one swift and heady stroke
Gave it something till it broke
'Gainst a wall.

And what followed? Did an oath
Such as *this*—or *that*—or both,
Which is language that I'm loth
To repeat,
Give expression to his bile
In such overwhelming style
That it rang for half a mile
Down the street?

None can tell us. But I ween
That he left the tragic scene
Clad in sorrow and chagrin
For that swipe,
And in future p'r'aps he'll keep
His emotions dug down deep
Or reserve them for a cheap
Kind of pipe. DUM-DUM.



"They all seem to think it ought to have smoke coming out of the chimney."

The Old Gentleman is Hasty

"E DON'T know what 'e's letting 'isself in for," said Parker, as a flag officer of middle years passed the open door of the saloon bar on his way to the dignity and seclusion of the little lounge at the rear of the quayside hotel. "The old gentleman 'as been lying there waiting for orficers to advise since ten o'clock this morning. 'E's done the same thing every day since we came down 'ere a fortnight ago, and some of them don't 'arf look ragged by the time 'e's finished with them.

"I think I told you 'ow 'e started pestering the Admiralty for a ship about last September twelvemonth. Well, a few days after the war broke out they sent a wire for 'im. I never seen a man more pleased with 'isself. All the way to the station 'e told me about the bombardment of Alexandria and 'ow it proved 'e was always right about the breech-loading gun. When 'e got to White'all 'e found that the Admiralty didn't want 'im themselves, but it seems there was a bit of a shortage of admirals for censorship jobs and they wanted 'im for one of them.

"You can understand 'ow disappointed 'e was, but 'e decided to take the job and 'e 'eld it for the best part of a month. 'E was put on to watching all the advertisements going into the noospapers and seeing that there wasn't no secret messages in them. Being a man of strong opinions 'e 'ad a good deal of trouble with the shops and such like, especially at first when 'e insisted on altering all the figures in the prices in case they might be codes. There was a 'ell of a row just before 'e left. I 'ave 'eard that it was because one of the shops wanted to put in an advertisement for something called musquash and 'e wouldn't 'ave it. They insisted it was the right name for the stuff but 'e said 'e'd never 'eard of it and 'e considered it very suspicious, so 'e tried to 'ave the chap arrested.

"After that we went back to Friars Marston for a bit and 'e 'ad to pick up the threads of making life 'ell for the local A.R.P. When all of them that mattered 'ad resigned 'e got restless again like a monkey with no fleas, so 'e decided to come down 'ere so as to be 'andy with advice in case serving orficers 'ad any difficult problems.

"It's magnetic mines 'e's concerned about now. 'E's got a theory that it's all this tacking and zigzagging that's the trouble. 'E ses the way to defeat



"Now I want three volunteers for a perfectly filthy job—Numbers two, four and six."

them is to steam full ahead so as not to give them time to think.

"E always was a impetuous kind of gentleman even in 'is sea-going days. I remember a bit of trouble we got into in the Red Sea back-end of the last war. 'E was Rear-Admiral retired then, employed as Lieutenant-Commander, and they were 'ard put to it to find work for 'im where 'e wouldn't make 'isself felt. One day they give 'im the job of taking one of the canal dredgers down to Basra. Knowing 'e couldn't make more than three or four knots I suppose they felt 'appy at the thought of keeping 'im out of the way for three months.

"The old gentleman wasn't too keen about it, but after 'e'd badgered them into mounting a twelve-pounder gun on the dredger in case of submarines 'e began to take a pride in 'is command. 'Is quarters were on the tug, but the weather was fine most of the way and 'e could easily slip to and fro, so 'e spent most of 'is time on the dredger, where 'e 'ad more quarter-deck and could drive the skipper of the tug frantic by making signals to 'im all day.

"One day we was 'ugging the coast as usual and we come up with a native craft lying into what wind there was about five miles out. When we got near she suddenly started making orf.

"I don't like it at all," ses the old

gentleman; 'she's seen our flag and she's got something to 'ide. Clear the decks for action!"

"Right you are, Sir," ses the skipper of the dredger. "Take that bucket out of the way, Bill." 'E was the only one aboard that 'ad done a course of gun-laying and was as keen as mustard.

"Put a shot acrorst 'er bows," ses the old gentleman.

"I suppose the dredger skipper 'adn't picked it all up in 'is two lessons, but any'ow as luck would 'ave it 'is first shot took orf about six foot of mast and brought down most of the rigging. 'E apologised 'andsome for it and offered to try again, but the old gentleman said 'e thought that would do. We was getting the boat out when we see that the Arabs 'ad started coming acrorst to us in their dinghy, so we waited. I could see the old gentleman was worried about not being in uniform, 'aving found climbing about the dredger 'ard on 'is whites. When the dinghy got alongside a little Arab with a ginger moustache climbed aboard and walked straight up to the old gentleman.

"Are you in command of this 'ere floating abomination?" 'e ses very quiet, speaking English as well as you or me, 'because if you are I'd 'ave you know that you're under arrest, you murdering ruddy mud-shoveller."

"Wot!" ses the old gentleman, dancing on the deck. 'I'll teach you 'ow to talk to an officer in 'Is Majesty's Navy, you ruddy 'eathen dragoman. Take them shoes orf on my quarter-deck! I ain't sure whether you was slaving or spying, but you and your crew are going into irons until I can 'and you over to the first warship we sight."

"At first it looked as if there was going to be a free fight, but after a while they got to talking quieter and it turned out that this 'ere Arab was a British major attached to the Arab army out for a day's fishing. When they 'ad cooled down the old gentleman could see 'e'd been 'asty and 'e come as near as ever I seen 'im to apologising; but the major made it easy for 'im. It seemed there was a bit of 'arbour mouth 'e wanted cleared in a little place about ten mile down the coast. So the old gentleman took the excuse of the weather freshening and the tug being short of bunkers to make in there and do a couple of days' free dredging for 'is fun.

"I never 'eard 'im speak of it again but once, a few years back, when 'e 'ad some young ladies to tea. 'Yes, I done a bit of slaving in the Red Sea once,' 'e ses, and then 'e caught my eye, bringing the tea in, and 'e wouldn't say no more about it." A. M. C.



POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS—THE MYSTERIOUS EAST

Masterpiece

GIVE me horses and open air;
Give me sheriffs in big sombreros;
Give me tough guys with shingled hair,
Failing freely to hit their heroes.

Give me a lawyer to abscond;
Give me a baffling murder case;
Give me a missing bond or blonde;
Mix them up in a motor chase.

Give me a fire and a flood a minute;
Push me a villain underneath;
Give me a good man just not in it
Biting the boss's daughter's teeth.

Give me a girl with sticky lips;
Show her the stairs and make her pose;
Find her a man with thin black strips
Wobbling winningly under his nose.

Give me a butler and a car
Bearing a Jew and an English earl
And I will make them make a star
Out of a little orphan girl.

Give me a city with a painted sunset;
Build me a palace with a cardboard strut;
Make me a dazzling hundred-ton set
All for the setting of a song that's cut.

Give me a story I can steal
And I will make you a super flick;
I will make you reel on reel;
I shall stagger you till you're sick.

Give me a million pounds to blue;
Give me glamour and legs galore;
Give me an English author, do—
Lord only knows what I want him for!



"ALAS, POOR LESLIE!"

Mr. PUNCH'S HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND



IN A GOOD CAUSE

AUDITORS' REPORT

We have audited the books of the "Punch Hospital Comforts Fund" for the period ended 31st December, 1939, with the vouchers relating thereto.

We certify that no expenses of any kind have been charged against the Fund and that all payments have been in respect of materials distributed.

101 Leadenhall Street,
London, E.C.3.
5th January, 1940.

J. H. HUGILL & Co.,
Chartered Accountants,
Hon. Auditors.

YOU are asked to think and to think in good time of the wounded. At any moment their needs may become imperative. They will not consider themselves heroes; they will not complain; they will be those who have neither fallen in action nor come safely through the ordeal, but are part of the reparable human wastage of war; we shall hear them speaking again—the less seriously disabled—in the language long ago familiar to us: "I got my packet at —; I was luckier than some," and yet there will be months of pain in front of them before they can take their place on active service or in civilian life once more.

You are also asked to think of the Navy at sea, the men in the trenches, the men flying, minesweepers, search-light posts, anti-aircraft stations. All are in exposed, cold, wet situations. They need Balaclava helmets, stockings, gloves, mittens and woollen waistcoats for the winter.

Mr. Punch has already distributed large quantities of materials of all kinds, but there is a great deal more to be done. Cold weather has arrived and the need for woollen articles is very urgent. Every penny subscribed will be used for the comfort of the men serving, or Hospital patients, and no expenses whatever will be deducted. Though we know well that these are days of privation and self-denial for all, we yet ask you, those who can, to send us donations, large or small, according to your means; for experience in the last war has proved a hundred times over how urgent is the call and how invaluable is the assistance that can be rendered. Will you please address all contributions and inquiries to: Punch Hospital Comforts Fund, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

M
worth
been
my e
broth
hards
Be
Jim t
away
vainly
father
did ru
fast-t
my fa
and r
young
noboe
saying
that
broth
My
back
gun,
shoul



"As I'd adopted him, I persuaded the Zoo people to let me have him here for the cold weather."

Equestrian Pursuits

MY family did not have an annual holiday. Looking back on things this seems scarcely worth recording, as our lives must have been one long holiday, but at the time my elder brother Jim, my younger brother Henry and I considered it a hardship.

Because of this my elder brother Jim threatened every summer to run away from home. One year, after vainly endeavouring to persuade my father to spend a week in London, he did run away. He announced at breakfast-time that he intended to do so, but my father was reading his newspaper and my mother was busy scolding my younger brother Henry for spilling marmalade on a clean table-cloth, so nobody took any notice of what he was saying. It was not until the evening that my mother realised that my elder brother Jim was missing.

My father said that he would come back because he had not taken his air-gun, but my mother thought something should be done about it. That night

she set a candle in the hall window and went to bed confident that its beams would draw her son home. The next morning, as his bed was undisturbed, she became alarmed and made my father send out search-parties.

We found that my elder brother Jim's money-box was empty and I was able to inform my parents that it had contained one and ninepence, because I had borrowed twopenny from it just before Jim ran away. This led us to inquire at the village shop, where we learnt that he had spent exactly this amount at eleven o'clock on the previous day. He had purchased eight penny buns, five bottles of ginger beer, six sherbet-fountains, three comic papers and twopennyworth of bull's eyes. News of this extravagance relieved my father, who said that as Jim had spent all his money he would soon come home. My mother, however, became more alarmed than ever. She imagined that Jim would now be driven to eat berries to satisfy his hunger and she was certain that he would be poisoned.

The search-parties returned to report that they had failed to find any trace of the fugitive, so police-stations throughout the county were notified by telegraph and asked to keep a look-out for him. We spent two anxious days. Then my elder brother Jim, having exhausted his supplies, came down from the attic, where he had been hiding. When asked what made him do such a thing, he said that he had been hurt because nobody seemed interested in whether he ran away.

My mother wanted my father to punish my elder brother Jim for this escapade, but my father refused to do so. Instead he announced that Jim's conduct had made him realise that it was time we all saw something of the world and that he intended to take us for a holiday.

My father and my mother found it difficult to agree on the part of the world we were to be shown. My father favoured a moral and instructive tour of abbeys, castles and cathedrals, while my mother's tendencies were

out to catch the horse. He approached it confidently, holding out his right hand, snapping his thumb and forefinger and saying, "There now, there now," in a persuasive manner.

The horse stood still until my father was within a few feet of it, then gently backed away. My father increased his pace; the horse turned aside and began to walk in a circle. My father ran; the horse trotted, always keeping just out of reach and regarding him with a benign and moral eye. My father thought he would try again after breakfast.

At this second attempt my elder brother Jim assisted. It was unsuccessful. My elder brother Jim thought that he would have been able to lasso the horse had he only had a lasso. My father then asked us all to help.

My mother, my father, my elder brother Jim, my younger brother Henry and I spread ourselves in a line across the field and advanced slowly, intending to drive the horse into one corner. We had nearly done so when, without warning, it gave a loud neigh that sent my mother, my younger brother Henry and me running back to the caravan. Through the gap in the defences the horse escaped with ease. My mother refused to take any further part in these proceedings and begged my father to send my elder brother Jim to fetch the man who owned the horse, so that he could show us how to catch it.

The man appeared late in the afternoon. He seemed unable to appreciate our difficulty, and kept telling us that this was a horse of no habits at all.

"It won't let us come near it," said my father.

"That's funny," the man said. "It never had no habits."

He stood in the middle of the field, made a clucking noise and the horse came trotting up to him. He caught the halter and led it to my father.

"There you are," he said. "I told you it never had no habits."

By this time it was too late to move, so my father let the horse go again, and we all spent the evening practising clucking noises.

The next morning my father stood in the middle of the field and clucked without effect. Then we all tried in turn, but the horse regarded us with mild astonishment. My mother said it was lucky we were not far from home. She also said that even if we managed to catch the horse and, unlikely still, harness it to the caravan, she would refuse to go anywhere, because we would only be marooned in some more isolated spot. She persuaded my father to go and ask the man to take it back

and accept half the month's rent. But the man refused. He said that we had hired it for a month and we would have to pay for it for a month—and feed the horse too.

As my father was afraid that if we stayed in the same field the farmer who owned it would object, he persuaded the man to come and catch the horse again and harness it to the caravan. Then we drove back to our house and put the caravan in the yard and the horse in the garden, where it ate all my mother's flowering shrubs.

My elder brother Jim, my younger brother Henry and I slept in the caravan all the month, so we had our holiday. We also saw something of the world, for my father took us into the town one evening to a lantern lecture

at the Mission Hall. It was entitled: "The Cathedrals of England." My elder brother Jim took advantage of the darkness to gorge himself with peppermints and was sick on the way home.

Hardly Worth It

"A sum of \$7,000 has been set aside for the building of a decrepit home."

Stationery Office Publication.

"The King visited an Army Division to-day somewhere in the Southend Command."—Yorkshire Paper.

The tide was [censored].



Burlington House: The Art Armistice

AT Burlington House Lamb and Lavery lie down together and Pissarro and Sickert are hanging with Munnings and Salisbury in the cause of charity. The United Artists' Exhibition includes the work of twenty-four societies, everything, except for a few portraits, is for sale, and half the selling-price is divided between the Lord Mayor's Red Cross and St. John Fund and the Artists' General Benevolent Institution. This is an occasion, after standing and staring, to buy, and it is worth noticing that the large majority of the drawings and etchings in the Architectural Room are priced at under £20, many under £10, some under £5. Collectors might notice especially two dry-points by Henry Rushbury (1679 and 1690), and a pair of elegant accurate chalk drawings of Welsh scenery by Ian Strang (1806 and 1818); also a pencil-sketch by Epstein (1819), a drapery study by Louisa Hodgson (1841), and R. G. Dent's aquatint, *Plucking Geese* (1608).

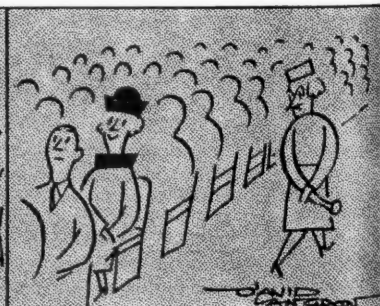
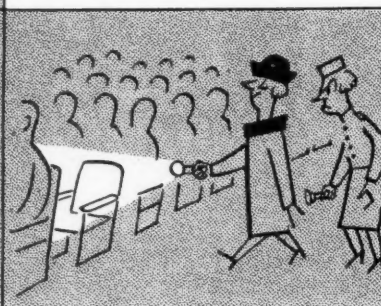
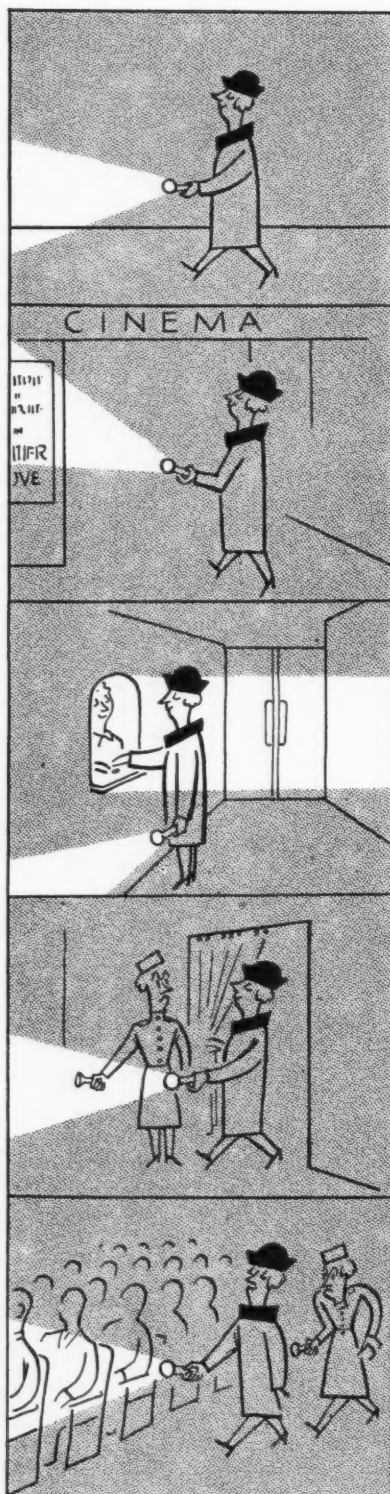
Drawings at a big exhibition should really be considered, like Swedish *hors d'œuvres*, apart from the main meal, which at Burlington House this time is rich, mixed, and half as large again as usual. Most people will enjoy the variety, and even the most narrow-minded will find some corner where they can feel at home. Dame Laura Knight, Sir John Lavery, A. J. Munnings and F. O. Salisbury appear, like the crowd in *Savonarola*, making remarks highly characteristic of themselves. By contrast there is an abstract painting by Ben Nicholson (1213), a collage by Roland Penrose (1178), and a brilliant sprinkling of surrealism in Galleries VI and VII, where James Fitton, Ithell Colquhoun

and John Armstrong are all represented. Augustus John and Henry Lamb are exhibiting portraits here, John Nash has a delightful undulating landscape, *The Sand-pit* (1369), and there are two Sickerts, *Peggy Ashcroft as Miss Hardcastle* (1370) and *Maison Sadoulet, Dieppe* (1170). The Society of Marine Artists have Gallery V almost entirely to themselves, and you can study their blue-water-and-weather-scapes and the intricate charm of tackle—this especially in Montague Dawson's *Passing Sails* (1030). Gallery IV contains among other things Doris Zinkeisen's delicately-coloured *Dressing for the Act* (889), and *The Surrey Canal, Camberwell*, by Algernon Newton, who provides, not for the first time, the pleasantest picture in the exhibition, with its Canaletto-like accuracy and its still air, light and water; and in Gallery III you can join a small crowd in front of Tom Chadwick's *The Proverbs* (764) and see how many (apart from the gift-horse and the swine with the pearls) you can spot.

The water-colourists have two rooms, the most satisfactory of all perhaps. There are three very distinctive pictures here: Muirhead Bone's *Cromer* (38), Eric Ravilious' *Wilmington Giant* (1902) and Edward Bawden's *August, 5 p.m.* (1909), and a good many charming small canvases which—this is not adverse criticism—would hang very well in a drawing-room.

On the way out, through Gallery II, there are two studies of buildings by Lucien Pissarro (175 and 190); and before collecting your umbrella you can help two excellent causes by putting your name down for a picture at the counter in the Entrance Hall.

P. M. K.



At the Play

"BEHIND THE SCHEMES"
(SHAFTESBURY)

ANYONE who works in Fleet Street will tell you that the difficulty in being funny about it is that it is so funny already. Exaggeration must be doubly exaggerated if the lunacies of such an irrational industry are to be shown up, and the satirist is likely to strain himself in his effort to improve on the imaginative flights of the publicity experts, whose promotion is marked by the circulation graph as it goes up and for whom unemployment is heralded as it goes down.

These are popularly pictured as hard-eyed monsters gloating diabolically as they give yet another callous tug at the public heart-strings; but in fact they are usually gentle genial men with large families in the outer suburbs, and many of them are brought hot milk at eleven by their secretaries. But not even hot milk prevents them from thinking of the most surprising ways of making people buy a newspaper.

This slender little comedy sets out to guy them, but is altogether too timid in its methods. Its central idea is good, that a paper should offer a beautiful bride as part of the prize in a competition, and that the man who has fathered this brilliant scheme should then commit the unforgivable sin of falling in love with the girl himself; but it gets lost in a murk of false sentiment and rather tedious business.

The paper in question is *The Daily Quiver*. Its rival has suddenly jumped ahead, and "His Lordship" is in a tantrum suitable to so grave a situation. Telephones are fusing in all directions. He gives his publicity staff three months (surely a long time?) in which to win back the lead, with the alternative of a general sack. They tear their hair, they drink cups of tea, they pace up and down, but nothing occurs to them which looks like being a big enough tonic for a sick mammoth, until *Howard*, the brightest of a bunch who would be lucky

to survive an afternoon on any paper, gets on to the idea of a bonus bride. In the waiting-room is a disgruntled Beauty Queen, down-and-out now that her ballyhoo is over, and willing, so she has told *Howard*, to do anything which will give her another break.

clothes and a thousand pithy words a day dripping from *Howard's* typewriter make her the most talked-of girl in England. The stunt is magnificently successful. The rival paper is left panting in the rear, and the ordinary shares of *The Quiver* rocket madly, pursued by droves of eager bulls.

In due course it is announced that the winner of the competition is a *Mr. Fairfield* of Leeds. While newsboys are trumpeting this non-committal piece of news to an anxious world, *Howard* and the future *Mrs. Fairfield* are discovering, in a somewhat sticky scene, an affinity too deep to be ignored. *Mr. Fairfield*, hurriedly brought from Leeds, justifies the worst fears; desperate attempts to separate *Howard* and the first prize finally fail; then by an admirable chance *Mr. Fairfield* turns out to be quite a well-known bigamist, so that young love triumphs comfortably. And if there is one subject which any body of publicity-men knows how to handle better than another, it is young love cantering home with bigamy and all that sort of thing two jumps behind.

So everyone, including "His Lordship," is satisfied. More might have been done with him, I thought, although his personality was only reflected to us through the telephone. Myself, I like my theatrical Press Peers exotic, whimsical and burnt up with the desire to make history. This one was almost a thinking being.

And much more might have been made of the story. It has its moments of mild humour, but it winds about among minor characters and seems uncertain whether to dwell on the predicament of the girl or to go full out for office farce. Its characters are not very convincing. The big part of the dyspeptic publicity chief has an uncertain ring about it, for the man is distinguished by a complete lack of ideas; nor is *Mr. FRANKLIN DYALL*, excellent actor though he is, at all the type one would expect. *Miss NANCY O'NEIL* performs bravely as the bride, and *Mr. PETER GLENVILLE*, though he over-acts, makes *Howard* the most authentic of these men of the Press. ERIC.



HUSTLER IN FLEET STREET

Irene Phillips MISS JANE SYKES
Bert Whiting MR. RONALD SHINER

"His Lordship" accepts the suggestion, and the publicity department goes ahead regardless. During the weeks of the competition its first prize is "built up" on a fantastic scale. A flat in Mayfair, staggeringly expensive



"THE QUIVER'S" CUPID REVOLTS

Tony Howard MR. PETER GLENVILLE
Jill Henley MISS NANCY O'NEIL
Andrew Bevan MR. FRANKLIN DYALL

The Slave's Dream

[". . . although the visits of Government officials on private estates are never greeted with unmixed approval."
Scientific Journal.]

"SNAKES alive!
My dear, there's a man marching up the drive.
Come here!
Don't let him see you, my dear.
I'm sure he's an Inspector,
Probably come to ask us if we are
Equipped with a submarine detector.
He's got that awful grim look
And a little book."

"Good-morning, Inspector,
It's very nice to see you in this sector.
What can I do for you to-day?
(Have a glass of sherry?) Yes, as you say—
(It isn't bad sherry, it was left me by my father.
Oh, certainly, a whisky if you'd rather)—
I ought to have filled up those forms a week ago,
But I think I can tell you all you want to know
(For I assure you, Inspector,
I'm not a conscientious objector
Or a mere moaner—
Only a rather harassed land-owner
With the very best intentions).
If it's about the dimensions



"You—you—ex-evacuees!!"

Of my new cottages, they're conscientiously planned;
But of course if it's the law of the land,
Or the County Council or whatever it may be,
I quite see.
But I did put a new cesspool in last year
With a valvular gear,
Inspector,
And a Jackson's patent double-clamp disinfector.
And I'm afraid
You're quite wrong about my game licence, for it's
paid;
And I've taken out licences for all my dogs twice.
I don't think I have to pay (do I?) on my little boy's
white mice;
And there are no longer any coats-of-arms
On the gateways of my farms.
I keep
Fifty-four head of Ayrshire cattle and two sheep;
I have twenty hens,
Who live in pens;
I have eight acres under wheat, four oats and four barley
(My ploughman is called Charley),
Sugar-beet one,
Lucerne none, rape none, mangel-wurzel none.
I've been doing my best for the nation
With an acre of afforestation.
There's half an acre of kitchen-garden—
No, I beg pardon,
There's an odd
Rod,
Pole or perch—I forget which, but perhaps it doesn't
matter—
And in addition to the latter
There's a small flower-garden—my wife looks after that.
We don't keep a cat;
My children are not yet of school age,
Though they will shortly reach that stage.
There's a tractor and a Rolls and a Ford;
I think that's about all—Oh, Lord!
I forgot, there's another small factor
Which I had better mention, Inspector;
There's a second tractor
Which I've lent to the Rector
Because he wears a chest-protector.
It's fitted with an epidiascopic projector,
Inspector,
And a refractor
And a reflector,
And was given to me by my brother Hector,
Who's an actor
And a great collector . . .

WHAT! YOU'RE NOT AN INSPECTOR AT ALL?
ONLY COME ABOUT THE SALVATION ARMY HUNT BALL?"

"Please do wake,
Or I shall give you a good shake.
You've been screaming in your sleep."
"Oh, I've had such a dreadful nightmare,
Darling Bo-peep."

J. C. S.



"I don't see mentioned in any of these references, Jane Perkins, whether you take sugar in your tea."

Lieutenant Swordfrog and the Canadians

WELL, the Canadians are over here in E—d once more, and arriving in increasing numbers. A battalion of them is encamped quite near to ours, and we have lost our Lieutenant Swordfrog. I don't mean we've lost him in the way one frequently loses things when camped near Canadians—those three bicycles at Gavrelle in 1917, for instance—we've merely lent him to them for a fortnight's liaison and see-England-now duty.

He came back yesterday, and for the moment is quite unbearable, just *too* Canadian. He slouches about in the Mess in a studied "loose-limbed" manner, which only knocks people's glasses over; he speaks like a cross between Gary Cooper and Horace Horse—his idea of the accent; and he is constantly referring familiarly to Mounties, trappers and the Far Frozen North as if the snow were hardly dry behind his ears.

However, we are working on him. We now have a poem beginning:

*"Flat of foot was 'Canuck' Swordfrog,
Flat of foot and fish of feature,
Shooting off his mouth before us,
Cod-like in an armchair lounging..."*

There is a lot more of it, and when it gets *really* personal later on, Swordfrog stalks angrily out of the room. At which we tell him to come off it and have a small fiawatha and soda with



"I've just won the first prize in a crossword competition—a tour round the world for two people."

us for Gitche Manitou's sake! This only makes him more furious than ever. Like the Mounties, we always get our man.

He brought back one good story though. It seemed there was one of the Canadian officers who'd been getting pretty much on the others' nerves for weeks. He was a Great Traveller. He was a Broadminded Man of Experience. He was a Citizen of the World. He knew Canada from Esquimalt to St. John's, and called all the United States by their nicknames. He'd always visited six places which any six men with him hadn't. He also talked largely about the three-thousand-mile independent border between Canada and the U.S.A.; and in contrast—his big theme, and greatest crime of all to his brother officers—he was highly scornful of France, England, Belgium, and the other little European countries,

with hardly any space for a man to move about in and yet hedged off from one another by absurd gun-bristling frontiers, passport systems, currencies and the like. He was, in short, an unpleasant fellow to live with.

Swordfrog arrived in the Canadian Mess just as some of them had found an opportunity to teach Lieutenant Moccasin a lesson. "He's so full of himself, we guess we'd better empty some of it out," they explained to Swordfrog, who found himself apparently in on it. For the occasion was a trip that three officers, Moccasin being one of them, had to make by road and in mufti to a seaport somewhere in E—d and W—s—well, to be precise, somewhere in W—s; and Swordfrog was going with them as liaison officer and general dogsbody.

They had passed through Hereford, going west—sorry, through H—d,

going w—t, and were approaching the borders of—oh, never mind the Censor!—Wales, when Captain Maple-leaf started the ball by saying to Moccasin:

"Soon be in Wales now. Got your passport ready?"

"Say, do we really need passports?"

"Naturally. You're in plain clothes, not uniform."

"But for Wales, I mean?"

"Well, of course. We're in Europe now!"

"That's right," confirmed Swordfrog when appealed to, pulling his out ostentatiously. "I should have told you, but I thought you knew."

"Sure! You're a travelled man," added Lieutenant Birchbark, sailing a little near the wind.

Not that it mattered. Moccasin was already well away on his favourite theme, ending up by wondering why in

hell every fiddling little county in England didn't have a customs barrier of its own and be done with it. They let him gurgel out like a bath-waste and then held a council of war on the situation.

"Got to get you through somehow," said Mapleleaf. "What do you suggest, Englishman?"

"Well, they're not too strict on this part of the border," Swordfrog had been well coached. "They *may* not examine the car, if we handle them right."

"I get you. We'll hide him in the back. How far off are we?"

"About a mile."

"Then we'd better start now," said the other grimly.

Moccasin protested but never suspected. It was so exactly the sort of thing he constantly inveighed against. Passports to go into Wales indeed!

They made him crouch down on the floor in the back—after an urgent debate as to whether it wouldn't be better to lock him up in the boot. They covered him with rugs and piled two suit-cases on him. With a touch of genius Birchbark arranged a petrol-tin so that the corner stuck into his ribs. Then after solemnly winking at each other all round, they warned him not to speak a word and drove on. Mapleleaf took his time over it and selected all the most uneven parts of the road. Suit-cases, petrol-tins and Moccasin bumped and jumbled together in the back. Whenever he swore under his breath they angrily hissed him to silence.

Round about the Welsh border—at a likely-looking pub—Swordfrog was inspired to say: "There's the frontier post!" in a clear voice. They all got out.

"Not a move!" growled Mapleleaf to the suit-cases, "or we'll all be in gaol."

It was a nice pub. The beer was good and from the warm interior they could see the car outside. After twenty minutes Swordfrog began to feel sorry for Moccasin, but Birchbark said grimly: "You haven't had him in the Mess for two months," and ordered another round.

As a final touch they got the landlord to come with them to the car and speak loudly in Welsh, while they said things like, "No, nothing to declare," and "Nice of you not to trouble to look at the car."

They drove on. After another mile of bumpy road they let Moccasin up for air. He was a sorry sight—red-faced, stiff, gasping and cold. There was very little fight left in him; but his friends, it seemed, hadn't quite finished.

"That was a dam' near thing," said

Mapleleaf, "when that guy wanted to examine the car."

"I had to slip him a pound for drinks to let us past," put in Birchbark swiftly. "You might hand it over, Moccasin. It was on your account."

Moccasin, wanly petulant about the venality of the minor officials of third-rate countries, handed it over so easily that Mapleleaf decided to cut himself in.

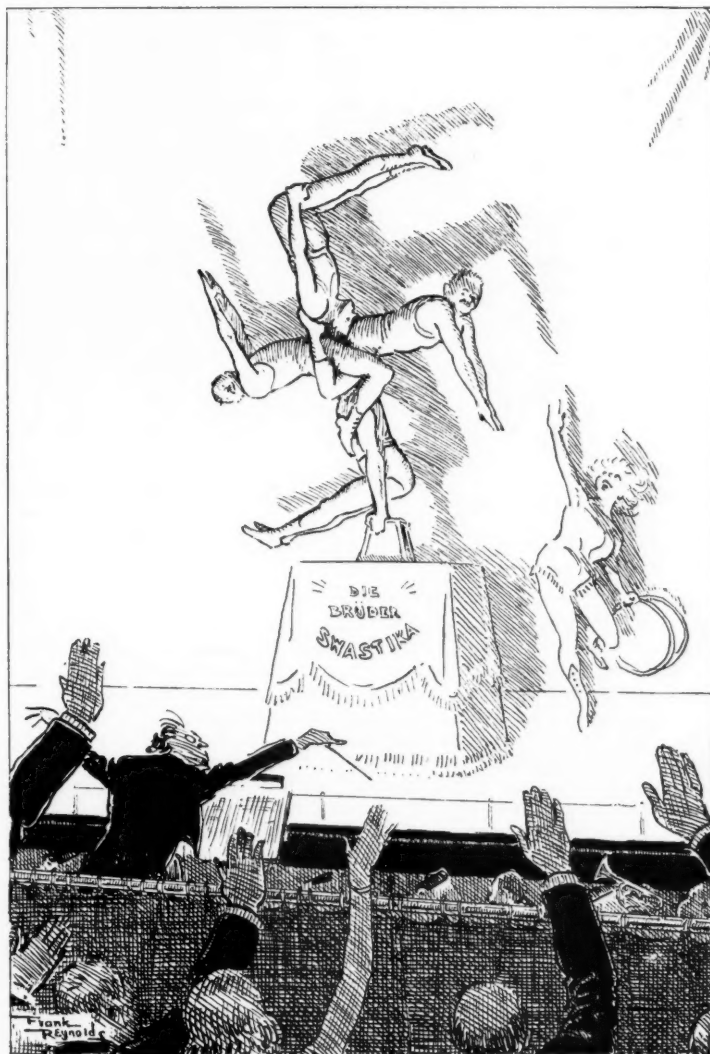
"And two pounds for me while you're at it," he said. "I thought you wouldn't want to be without the right money, so I changed some for you into Welsh. Got twenty-five and a half harlechs to the pound too."

Again the grumbling Moccasin paid.

"A pity," said Mapleleaf to Swordfrog that night, "that you couldn't get in on any dough too. Still, there'll be one fine row when he finds out and tries to get it back."

"When are you going to tell the others?" asked Swordfrog curiously.

"Oh, we're not. *He'll* do it himself, two minutes after he gets back—if he doesn't write to the papers first. Petty European restrictions, three thousand miles of Canada and U.S.A. . . . You know his line. Oh, boy, what a night that'll be! And then I bet he'll never, never mention frontiers or European countries again. Well, suits *us*! That *was* the idea!" A. A.



Finale

huddled at the middle of the web—"Squint-Eyed Stalin." To-day he faces the free countries of the West without the best brains and fighting soul of the Russia he has murdered.

Consideravit Agrum

If you can dwell contentedly in the country you are on the winning side of the world; for nowhere else is there such an unconquerable will to live as persists in the country-side. This "gallant tenacity," as Miss V. SACKVILLE-WEST so discerningly calls it, is the heart and soul of her delightfully miscellaneous *Country Notes* (MICHAEL JOSEPH, 10/6). Like WHITE of Selborne, she has the wit to grasp what the shifting seasons promise and perform, the good sense to collaborate in and the grace to describe what goes on and communicate a rare proportion of its pleasure. Here, from the first yellow ribbons and maroon buttons of the witch-hazel, you have the sweet of the year. But not only a gardener's year—gardening she rather shortsightedly calls "a luxury occupation," while pleading for waxy French potatoes and more Alpine strawberries—but a farmer's and breeder's. She buys a farm and studies coppice-planting. She makes a lake and stocks it with trout. You wish she would lead over here—who fitter?—the crusade so gamely started in France to make intelligent women more "land-minded." Meanwhile she has written a charming (and charmingly illustrated) book on a series of inexhaustible subjects.

A Novelist Dissects Himself.

Mr. GILBERT FRANKAU is perhaps as good a story-teller as we have in England at the moment. Now he has written the story of his own life, up to the age of fifty-five, which apparently brings it down pretty nearly to the present day. He calls the book *Self-Portrait* (HUTCHINSON, 8/6), adding as a subsidiary title that it is a novel of his own life. Certainly it is fuller of incident than most novels. Crises, financial or matrimonial, seem to have occupied his attention pretty fully since he came to man's estate. But he still seems to be in doubt as to his own character. He writes himself down at intervals as a kind of lunatic, a crazy fanatic, too much the die-hard, as suffering from persecution mania, capable of seeing things only from his own point of view, never from the other fellow's. At the same time he confesses to altruism, sincerity, and a *Don Quixote* spirit of which he is still unashamed. Thus freely analysing himself



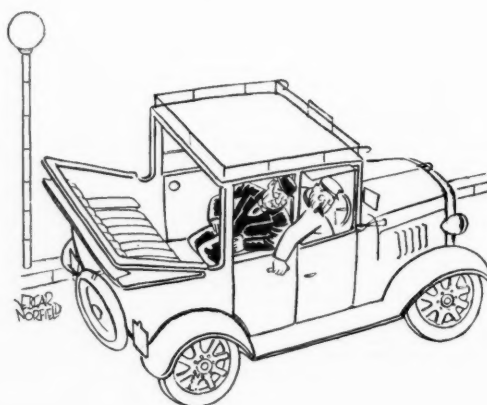
"Feel the quality of it, Sir. Let it run through your fingers . . ."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Comrade Cut-Throat

If the British Prime Minister were to have the whole of his Cabinet abruptly arrested, along with all senior officers of the fighting services, every Member of Parliament who has ever dared to put a question in the House, and various other persons who could not prove the purity of their Nevillism by instantaneous denunciation of friend or relation, we should begin to realise the meaning of the great Russian purge of 1937. It is to be understood that wives and families of suspects are equally involved, that arrests are to be followed not necessarily by trial but nearly always by execution, and that evidence or confessions or the lack of them are merely a matter of convenience. In Russia thousands even of little children were condemned as enemies of the State, and the total of victims was comparable with the casualties of a great war. W. G. KRIVITSKY's revelations in *I Was Stalin's Agent* (HAMISH HAMILTON, 10/6) cover STALIN's long-maintained determination, based on a not unnatural jealous admiration of HITLER's methods, to make a pact with Germany, his perfectly reasonable forgery of millions of American dollars, and his rather more surprising betrayal of Spain. Rings of spies within rings of spies circle in this devastating narrative about the one foul creature



"The railway station, backwards, please."



Super-Boy. "BUT, FATHER, IF WE HAVE ALREADY CONQUERED, WHY DOES THE WAR GO ON?"
Super-Man. "BE SILENT AND EAT YOUR HINDENBURG ROCK."

Frank Reynolds, January 17th, 1917

he has produced a book that is interesting enough, though hardly so interesting as the best of his novels. One gathers that he is a warm friend and a good hater, when he sees sufficient reason; that he started life with a high opinion of his ability—he could read before he reached the age of four and won scholarships and prizes at his private school and at Eton almost without effort; and that in later life he fancied himself equally as a man of business and as editor of a new weekly magazine. That *Britannia* business left a scar behind, but our author leaves us still supremely confident in himself, about to offer himself once more for service at the outbreak of another Great War and uttering the pious hope that this time "no puling politician" shall betray our victorious dead.

Mostly Valetta Terrace

To begin reviewing *Was it Yesterday?* (MACMILLAN, 8/6) at the wrong end is not so topsy-turvy a proceeding as it

sounds; for this (in part) fascinating retrospect of a seaside pre-last-war childhood ends with a glance at the age we live in which incidentally explains the vogue of its particular class of semi-fictional autobiography. Going back to Frittlesea twenty years after he left it as a boy, Mr. DAVID HORNER finds a population of "escapists," the uneducated living for the cinema, their betters for antique furniture. His own panoramic story is itself, one notes, reminiscent of both screen and junk-shop. Almost all its features fall under these respective headings, if we allot the more inept improprieties of his French visit to the film-fan and the delightful old ladies of his English sojourn to the connoisseur of period pieces. One doubts whether the public that enjoys *Miss Floud*, *Miss Hackbridge*, *Cousin Mary* and *Cousin Fanny* will take to *Madame de Boissey's* rather incredibly memorised gossip. But *Cousin Fanny's* garden, *Miss Floud's* cats, and a very pretty fashion of recounting the charms of both, ought to win approval everywhere.

Both Sides of the Medal

Sir T. SPENCE LYNE, K.C.V.O., C.B., D.S.O., joined the Navy as a ship's boy in 1885 and retired in 1925 as a Rear-Admiral—a remarkable achievement, as in his time the path from the hawse-hole to the quarter-deck was far more difficult than it is to-day. In fact since the time of Sir CLODESLEY SHOVEL there has been no other such case. In *Something About a Sailor* (JARROLD, 18/-) he tells of his career, of his steady rise in rating and rank, of his first command (a torpedo-boat which broke down but which he brought safely into port under sail), and so on to his last—the Boys' Training Ship which had first entered him on her books. He seems to have best enjoyed his two commissions (both packed with incident) in command of Yangtze River gunboats; but he describes with pardonable pride as the peak of his career his dining with His Majesty KING GEORGE V in the Royal Yacht as a Commodore, and the thrill he got when the Duke of CONNAUGHT, in R.N.R. Captain's uniform, called him "Sir." This book should be in every Lower Deck library to encourage all young seamen. It is a pity that his printer's reader has not been more careful: Lamash for Lamlash and Donvile for Domville are but two of many slips.

The Gardener's How, When and Where

There is still room for a book giving expert advice on the innumerable small problems that confront the amateur gardener. True, comparatively few of them would occur to the country practitioner: because if you don't know how to level and drain your plot, make your paths, get the land into good heart, plant it and keep it going, everyone else does, and you would have no lack of advisers. But the suburban gardener is not so lucky; and for him *Mr. Middleton Suggests* (WARD, LOCK, 5/-) scores of helpful solutions to scores of practical problems. One might wish advantage had been taken of our present pre-occupation with food to promote the English cottage style of gardening, with fruit-trees for beauty and use, and roses alongside the cabbage-patch. Even a very small garden, with cloches, can grow salads all the year round. In the admirable lists of plants for different soils and aspects, the commoner dianthus are classed as "lime-haters"—a libel surely on a highly accommodating race? But these are small spots on a genial and beneficent sun. Buy *Mr. MIDDLETON's* latest and it will probably save you its modest cost in a fortnight.



"I'm sorry, Mr. Whoople, you've already had your ration this week."

Murder, Magic and Mystery

Mr. CLAYTON RAWSON, in *The Footprints on the Ceiling* (COLLINS, 7/6), has assembled an exceptionally peculiar group of people and more or less marooned them on an island within "a stone's throw from Manhattan." *Merlini*, who was both a professional conjurer and an amateur detective, has claims to be considered the brilliant star of this party, but *Inspector Gavigan* of the Homicide Squad was also there, and so were various suspicious characters who gave the *Inspector* abundant excuses for indulging his inclination to make arrests with or without sound reason. Fair-minded readers of this tempestuous tale will, however, feel that the rather beetle-headed *Inspector* was unjustly handicapped when competing against such a wizard as *Merlini*. For the rest, seekers after sensations will find them in almost superabundance.

A Woman Sleuth

Although *Crime On Her Hands* (COLLINS, 7/6) is not so strikingly original as *Some Buried Caesar*, it does nothing to prevent Mr. REX STOUT from being included among America's most competent detective-story-tellers. On this occasion Mr. STOUT employs a female investigator, *Dol Bonner*, of whom *Colonel Bressenden*, who belonged to the State police, held a very poor opinion. *Miss Bonner* was, however, not to be unduly perturbed by such inconveniences as rudeness, and though while inquiring into the murder of her host she found herself impeded by bare-faced lying, she stuck to her job until a successful issue was reached. This tale,

in addition to its problem, gives a graphic picture of freaks and faddists when faced by American legal representatives.

A Very Perfect Knight

In a world that is not suffering from an excess of gaiety *The Adventures of Hiram Holliday* (MICHAEL JOSEPH, 7/6) may be recommended to provide its readers with many a chuckle. *Hiram* when he set out holiday-making had for fifteen years been copy-reader on a New York paper, but no sooner had he set foot in Europe than opportunities to perform gallantly were showered upon him, and over and over again in England and in other countries he came to the rescue of a lady in distress. Mr. PAUL GALLICO is, we are told, "a new writer," and he deserves congratulations on creating a figure who is really comical. In fact for those of us who are prepared to be amused without asking tiresome questions about possibilities this is a richly diverting yarn.

NOTICE.—Contributions or Communications requiring an answer should be accompanied by a stamped and addressed Envelope or Wrapper.

The entire Copyright in all Articles, Sketches, Drawings, etc., published in PUNCH is specifically reserved to the Proprietors throughout the countries signatory to the BERNE CONVENTION, the U.S.A., and the Argentine. Reproductions or imitations of any of these are therefore expressly forbidden. The Proprietors will, however, always consider any request from authors of literary contributions for permission to reprint.

CONDITIONS OF SALE AND SUPPLY.—This periodical is sold subject to the following conditions, namely, that it shall not, without the written consent of the publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade except at the full retail price of 6d.; and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition or in any unauthorised cover by way of Trade; or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever.